

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM**

Approved by the

Federal Communications Commission, March 3, 1997

Minutes of the State Emergency Communication Committee Meeting

November 15, 2013

Present: Terry Spring-KWPX TV; Marty Hadfield-Clear Channel Media & Entertainment Seattle; Jaye Compton-WSEMD; Lowell Kiesow-KPLU; Jim Dalke-DBS, Inc.; Ted Buehner-NWS Seattle; Robert Purdom-WS EMD; Clay Freinwald-WSU

Phone: Tom Sharp; Arthur Willets; Marlin Jackson

Clay called the meeting to order. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved. Clay used Outlook to announce the meeting this time. For anyone using Outlook, it worked fine.

The State EAS Plan Committee is still working on the plan revision. More work is needed.

The project to move the location of the state EAS plan on the web is progressing. It is moving from the WSAB web site to the Washington State Emergency Management web site. The documents will be available in PDF format only. This will make tampering harder. The index, Tab 31, will be revised each time one of the other tabs is revised. This will make it easier to make sure the correct revisions are in each plan book.

CSRIC, the FCC's advisory panel, is continuing their work. See <http://transition.fcc.gov/pshs/advisory/csric/>. Clay is involved with the National Test sub-panel. They are considering a new location code for the entire country to use during national tests. EAS boxes would need a firmware upgrade. Clay is chair of the State Plans Committee. In some states, the local broadcasters association provides EAS leadership. Part 11 of the FCC rules does not provide much guidance on the State EAS Committee. There are many holes. The FCC has limited authority over SECC's. They can't control state governments. The FCC is mostly interested in EAN distribution. Here in Washington see Tabs 5 and 10 of our state plan. EAS use in the individual states cannot interfere with national priorities.

The FCC is cracking down on EAS Tones used in commercials. There have been some hefty fines and voluntary contributions to the US Treasury.

Oregon is using FEMA IPAWS to originate local CAP messages.

The Mobile Emergency Alert Service uses data transmitted in ATSC signals to distribute alerts to mobile devices. See <http://atsc.org/cms/>.

We still need participation from the cable TV industry in the SECC. There has been some contact with the National Cable Television Association. See <http://www.ncta.com/>.

The project to put the local area plans on line is progressing, but there are still lots of blanks. Some areas need help in revising their local plans. Lewis County has an excellent plan that can be used as an example.

The Columbia Basin local area needs a broadcasting representative.

Jim Dalke, along with Joey Peters of MyStates, will drive the effort on Tab 13, Text To Speech. Straight text does not work. The text has to be written correctly for TTS to work correctly. The National Weather Service, overall, does a good job at this. They write the text they use for TTS differently than the text they use for reading. Washington State Emergency Management prefers creating audio files for the audio portions of alerts.

We need to be thinking about who will succeed Clay as chair of the SECC. Suggestions would be welcome.

More stations have been connected to the Premier Networks EAS feed. This will be covered by Tab 20 in the state plan. Spokane has been done, and a few other holes have been filled in. Some LP's are connected to Premier. Some markets will change LP's for better coverage and connection to EAS distribution sources. Tab 5, is being revised to reflect these changes. Tab 14, National EAS Distribution, is also being revised.

Make sure your state plans are up to date! The easiest way to check is to look at the latest version of Tab 31. This tab lists the current revision date of all the tabs in the plan. It is distributed periodically on the EAS remailer.

Columbia County has requested to be moved from the Columbia Basin local area to the Inland Northwest area. They are in the Spokane DMA. There are concerns about EAS there because of the inactivity of the Columbia Basin LECC. The local committee needs more broadcast involvement, but there are fewer people at the local stations. This needs to be a local effort. Clay is willing to help facilitate.

There was a discussion about holding the state EAS meetings in other areas. In Spokane, it could be at the Fire Training Center. They have video conferencing facilities. Not everyone who attends the meetings at Camp Murray would be able to make the trip to Spokane. Ellensburg is also a possibility. Ted will poll. This would probably happen for the May meeting to avoid having to travel in winter.

Emergency Managers need to become more involved with their local areas. Quite a few local plans are missing and/or need to be updated. Jaye will prod.

Should a list of Washington state cable systems be Tab 19? Maybe.

Does the 2 tone EAS attention signal still need to be used? The NWS doesn't use it and never has. It is required for broadcast stations under certain conditions. See 11.51 A & B in the FCC rules.

Wavepad is recommended for audio recording for EAS messages. Lowell will put out protocol.

There have been some issues with MyStates recently. They are working to resolve them.

At the National Weather Service, the recent Sage firmware update was performed by Lowell. There were many flood alerts in a short period of time in the Spokane area recently. The office is aware of the issue and will work to shorten the messages. It is the worst on cable systems because consumers TV's are forced to change channels for each alert. This could also happen in Seattle during flooding events, but these events are rare. The Seattle office will try to consolidate messages to limit their number. For AMBER Alerts, the Sage boxes are automated. So if someone sends a AMBER Alert in the middle of the night, they will relay it automatically. Lowell will change the programming on their box to delay middle of the night AMBER Alerts until morning. The Spokane office is working on getting a Sage unit operational to feed their weather radios. This will be similar to what is done in Seattle.

The NWS will start relaying CAP alerts originated elsewhere. The path will be as follows: Local alert>IPAWS> Hazcollect>NWS local office>EAS Weather Radio or NWS newswire

The Spokane monthly meeting will be next week. They will be working on their local plan.

Jim Pace has retired as Amateur Radio representative. Monte Simpson will replace him.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 14th at 9:30 AM at Camp Murray.

Terry Spring